GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(The National Geographic Society is a scientific and educational Society, wholly altruistic, incorporated under the Federal law as a non-commercial institution for the increase of geographic knowledge and its popular diffusion.)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

CONTENTS FOR WEEK OF JANUARY 21, 1924. Vol. II. No. 24.

1. The Tacna-Arica Controversy.
2. World's Biggest Hunt Abandoned.
3. Lassen: A "Home Talent" Volcano.
4. U. S. Navy in Polar Explorations.
5. Christopher Columbus: Travel Writer.

Photograph from Rear Admiral Robert E. Peary. © *National Geographic Society.*

SIX LITTLE ESKIMOS ON MAIN DECK OF PEARY'S ARCTIC SHIP "ROOSEVELT"

(See Bulletin No. 4.)

HOW TO OBTAIN THE BULLETIN

The Geographic News Bulletin is published weekly throughout the school year (thirty issues) and will be mailed to teachers for one year upon receipt of 25 cents (in stamps or money order). Entered as second-class matter, January 27, 1922, at the Post Office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized February 9, 1922.

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

The Tacna-Arica Controversy

JUST what is the Tacna and Arica controversy?

Naming of President Coolidge as arbitrator in this dispute again stimulated interest in a question which has agitated South America for a generation. It has been said that "no other issue has for so long held the attention of, or so disturbed all the neutral countries of the southern continent."

The Tacna and Arica question can perhaps best be understood if it is taken as a rough American equivalent of Alsace-Lorraine, Italia Irredenta, and the Danzig corridor, all jumbled together. On the surface, the Tacna-Arica matter for a time appeared to be merely a question of whether a plebiscite should be held and how, but there is a great deal more behind it. As a matter of fact it is intimately concerned with questions that involved Bolivia as well as Peru and Chile, though the first named country has no claim to the Tacna-Arica area itself and was not represented at the Washington conference on the subject.

Wars, treaties that are none too clear, indemnities, filibustering expeditions, valuable mineral deposits, strong military positions, national sensibilities and politics—these are some of the many cross-currents that affect both the two-sided and three-sided aspects of the problem.

Problem Born of War

Phases of the question can be traced back to the days when Peru and Bolivia were connected under the vice-royalty of Peru, but it became a full-fledged problem during the last quarter of the past century. Then Chile stopped more than 500 miles short of its present northern boundary, Peru extended some 300 miles farther south, and Bolivia—now the land-locked Switzerland of South America—had a coast-line of nearly 200 miles. This 500-mile strip is largely a region of desert plateaus and rocky mountains, and 60 years ago it was considered very nearly worthless. Chile had not even adequately explored her northern frontier provinces, and Bolivia and Peru were far from being intimately acquainted with their territories.

Then came the discovery of rich nitrate deposits in the Bolivian coastal region. There was a rush of miners and prospectors from various countries, among them many Chileans. When friction arose between the Bolivian government and a Chilean mining company over the payment of taxes, Chile sent soldiers and later declared war against Bolivia. Peru was drawn in as the ally of Bolivia, and from this three-cornered war the Tacna-Arica question was born.

Chile was completely victorious, and as the result of war acquired the entire Bolivian coastal region with its nitrate beds. From Peru the victorious country annexed its southernmost province, Tarapaca, also rich in nitrates. Next to Tarapaca on the north lay the Peruvian province of Tacna with the port of Arica. This region Chile determined to hold for a ten-year period after which there was to be a plebiscite to determine to which country—Peru or Chile—the area should afterwards belong. The details of the holding of this plebiscite were not clearly set out, and the two countries have not been able to agree as to the procedure.

UMI

© Publishers' Photo Service

A GRAPE ARBOR OF TACNA

In the heart of a fertile Andean valley nestles the little city of Tacna, capital of the province of the same name, and connected with its seaport, Arica, forty miles distant. (See Bulletin No. 1.)

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

World's Biggest Hunt Abandoned

THE greatest hunt in the world and the most unusual surviving court ceremony—the famous elephant drive of Siam—has been abolished.

Siam's centuries-old spring festival gives way before modernism which has adopted the machinery, the economics, and even literature of the East, for Shakespeare in translation now is a Siamese "best seller."

Once the hunt dramatized a military necessity and the King's annual visit to the ancient capital, Ayuthia, netted him elephants of war which were the first line of defense of the new Bangkok.

Motor Supplants Elephant

In later years the elephant was a commercial asset, especially in teak lumbering, but the motor has supplanted the animal, and rice fields are spread over the marshes where elephants were driven many miles to the royal stockade. The principal factor in the abolition of the spring "drive" may have been the enormous damages the state treasury had to pay rice growers for trampling their crop.

Weeks ahead of the King's arrival at temple-dotted Ayuthia a small army of "beaters" would spread out for scores of miles above the deserted city and begin their slow task of driving the elephants into one great herd.

By the time the animals have been herded at the banks of the Me Nam River the King has come up that river in a barge and occupies a royal "box" in a grandstand built back of the north wall of the stockade.

All the Siamese who can come are there. They tax the railroad trains, crowd the river with their craft, and even at that the greater number walk along the dusty roads.

The Climax of the "Drive"

The most spectacular feature of the entertainment is driving the slow-moving beasts across the river to the kraal. They splash and roll in the stream, spout water and scoop it with their swinging trunks, and trumpet in a guttural chorus like no other commotion that ever assailed the ear of man.

In command here are the tame elephants, who lead the way and bring up the rear, and innocently amble into the kraal for their unwitting companions to follow.

Once inside the trap the work of picking the "thoroughbreds" of the jostling, ear-flapping, panicky, gelatinous mass of animal flesh begins. A Siamese picks an elephant on "points" as a Kentuckian would a horse. His skin must be unbroken, not fungus-grown, and light in color. Black toenails are desirable and these should be intact. Many are rejected because their tails have been torn off in some jungle fight. The gait must be steady and even.

The elephants chosen are fastened to stakes, which makes many of them frenzied, and occasionally one breaks loose and attacks his fellows. Such battles are fervently hoped for by the spectators.

After the connoisseurs have picked a few hundred of the best animals the many more hundreds are set free and left to find their old haunts again.

Bolivia Would Buy "Corridor"

In the meantime, Bolivia, which had lost her road to the sea, continued to harbor the feeling that she had been misused and that some sort of "corridor" should be provided for her. For years Bolivia accepted only a truce with Chile, unwilling to agree to the total loss of her sea provinces. At one time Chile agreed to sell the land-locked country a port and a roadway through the former Peruvian province of Tarapaca, but Peru strenuously objected and the deal fell through. Later Bolivia accepted a money indemnity.

The treaty provision calling for a plebiscite for Tacna also provides that the country losing the land shall receive five million dollars from the winner. One solution of the matter suggested by Bolivia was that she, being in dire need of an outlet to a port, should be ceded the disputed region, and that she pay five million dollars to each of the other two countries.

Bulletin No. 1, January 21, 1924.

Form for Renewal of Bulletin Requests

Many requests for the Geographic News Bulletin were made for the year ending with this issue. If you desire the Bulletins continued kindly notify The Society promptly. The attached form may be used:

School Service Department
National Geographic Society
Washington, D. C.

Kindly send ..... copies of the Geographic News Bulletin for the school year beginning with the issue of ....., for classroom use, to

Name .....

Address for sending Bulletins.....

City ..... State.....

I am a teacher in..... school .....grade

Enclose 25 cents for each annual subscription

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Lassen: A "Home Talent" Volcano

AMERICANS are accustomed to thinking of Uncle Sam as an owner of volcanoes because of the array of them on the Alaskan Peninsula, headed by huge Katmai, and their occurrence in the Hawaiian Islands and the Philippines.

Volcanism, however, is not a far-away thing after all. The renewal of activity at Mount Lassen, in northern California, emphasizes the fact that we actually have a live volcano within the boundaries of one of our most populous states. This example of one of nature's most powerful forces is only about 200 miles north of San Francisco and 300 miles south of Portland.

Eruption of 1914 Historic

When Mount Lassen became active in 1914 it was a noteworthy event, for it was the first volcanic eruption within the borders of the United States proper known to have taken place within historic times. Stones and mud were thrown for half a mile from the crater, while ash drifted for 15 to 20 miles. Previously the region had been a sort of Yellowstone Park, with boiling mud springs emitting sulphurous gases; and a few agitated springs that approach geysers in activity.

Mount Lassen does not present a case of a volcano appearing inexplicably in a peaceful countryside. It is on the edge of one of the greatest ancient lava-flows in the world—a flow which covers large areas in northern California, Oregon, Washington and Idaho. Upon another edge of the same lava-flow is situated Yellowstone National Park with its near-volcanic phenomena.

On this same flow, farther north, are the huge volcanic cones, now extinct, of Mount Rainier, Mount Hood and Mount Shasta. The activity responsible for these large peaks and for the extensive flow took place hundreds of thousands, or even millions of years ago, before the last ice age. The region immediately around Lassen, alone, apparently has preserved a channel with the deep fires.

Our Volcanic National Park

A few miles north of Lassen is a cinder cone from which probably took place the latest eruption in the United States before 1914. Traditions among the Indians of the neighborhood tell of a time believed to have been 200 or 300 years ago, when smoke and cinders belched forth from this peak, darkening the sky for days and scattering ashes over a large area. The age of trees growing in the crater of this cone indicates, by one interpretation, that there also was a slight eruption about 80 years ago, but the America of that day, without telegraph wires and news service, was ignorant of an eruption, if one actually took place. Material from one of the eruptions of this vent dammed a small valley, creating a lake in which the standing stumps of drowned trees still are to be found.

In 1907 when all volcanic vents were believed to be extinct, Lassen and Cinder Cone were set apart as small National Monuments to serve as examples of recent volcanic activity. Since 1914, when it became known that there was pres-

UMI

© *National Geographic Society.*

THE ONLY SURVIVOR OF ST. PIERRE

It is estimated that 30,000 people lost their lives when Mont Pelee, on the island of Martinique, broke forth with a whirlwind of gas or steam that overwhelmed the city of St. Pierre, May 8, 1902. Only one ship, the "Roddam," escaped from the harbor, and the only person in the city to come through the ordeal alive was the Martinique negro in this picture, who was imprisoned in a dungeon (see Bulletin No. 5).

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

U. S. Navy in Polar Explorations

POLAR exploration, such as that proposed with aircraft next spring, is not a new type of enterprise for the American Navy.

Two of the outstanding men of their generations in the history of Polar exploration were officers of the U. S. Navy—Charles Wilkes, who discovered the Antarctic Continent on January 19, 1840, and Robert E. Peary, who attained the North Pole on April 6, 1909. Both were acting under the orders of the President and Secretary of the Navy, says a bulletin by Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, President of the National Geographic Society.

"It is a matter of pride to the members of the National Geographic Society that the monuments to Peary and Wilkes in the Arlington National Cemetery were placed there by their Society," Dr. Grosvenor continues.

Other Navy Explorers

"With these two names may be grouped other navy men whose enterprise and daring have added to our knowledge of the world. Among them are Charles Francis Hall, who pushed north from Thank God Harbor to within less than 8 degrees to the North Pole in October, 1871; George W. De Long, who lost his life in Polar work; William Francis Lynch, who in 1848 conducted a valuable official survey of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea; Matthew Calbraith Perry, who so diplomatically opened Japan to the outside world in 1853, and Thomas Oliver Selfridge who conducted surveys for a canal across the Isthmus of Panama in 1869-73.

"Wilkes, to this day, though his discoveries have been corroborated by such noted explorers as Sir Ernest Shackleton and others, has received scant popular acknowledgment. Americans hardly realize what great work he really did. Since recorded history only three continents have been discovered—America, Australia, and the Antarctic Continent, and Wilkes is the discoverer of the last. Though, like Columbus, he did not see the whole of the land he had found, he saw enough to make him realize that a continental land mass lay about the South Pole long before the nature of the earth's surface about the North Pole had been determined. When the indignities which he suffered as a result of his 'fabrication of the story of discovery' were atoned for, geographers rightly called the continent Wilkes Land. It is the only continent discovered by an American.

Peary's Early Work

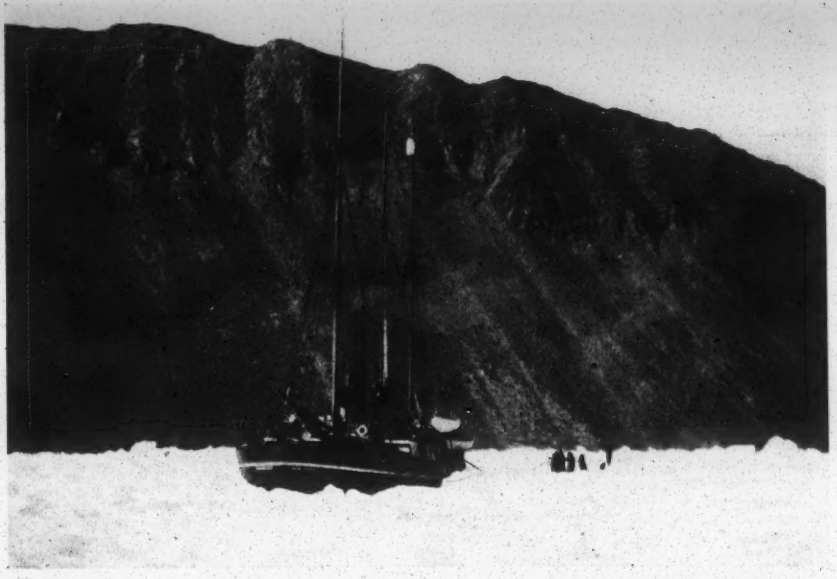
"Peary's interest was very early in his life aroused in polar exploration. During a brief summer excursion to Greenland in 1886, while he was a civil engineer in the U. S. Navy, he realized that the goal which had eluded so many hundreds of ambitious and dauntless men could be won only by a new method of attack.

"The first Arctic problem with which Peary grappled was considered at that time in importance second only to the conquest of the pole; namely, to determine the insularity of Greenland and the extent of its projection northward. At the very beginning of his first expedition to Greenland, in 1891, he suffered

UMI

ent activity in the region, an area of 125 square miles around the craters has been made into the Lassen Volcanic National Park. Automobile roads have been constructed from the nearest railroad station about 40 miles away, and hundreds of tourists have visited the region.

Bulletin No. 3, January 21, 1924.



© *National Geographic Society.*

PEARY'S ARCTIC SHIP "ROOSEVELT," ICEBOUND

The "Roosevelt" was 184 feet long, 35.5 feet broad, 16.2 feet deep, with a gross registered tonnage of 614 tons. The frames of the hull were of oak; the planking was double, yellow pine inside and oak outside. Its engines developed 1,000 horse-power, driving a single eleven-foot propeller. In addition, it carried 14 sails, with a sail area somewhat less than that of a three-masted coasting schooner of the same size.

GEOGRAPHIC NEWS BULLETIN

Published Weekly by

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY

(Founded in 1888 for the Increase and Diffusion of Geographic Knowledge)

General Headquarters, Washington, D. C.

Christopher Columbus: Travel Writer

ASK your friends to name a few of the great travel writers of all times and you will get many names—Marco Polo, Richard Hakluyt, Henry M. Stanley—probably none will mention Columbus.

If you did and you inquired "which Columbus" he would conclude you were asking a trick question.

The fame of Christopher Columbus as the discoverer of America has both overshadowed his own remarkably observant account of what he found among the Indies and the biographical narrative of his son, Ferdinand Columbus.

Both documents are known to geographers and historians; indeed, the latter's authorship has aroused considerable controversy, yet they are not read so popularly as are many other travel classics.

Trees "Stretching Up to the Stars"

An example of the descriptive style of Columbus is quoted from his remarks about Cuba, which he called Juana, and at first believed to be a part of the China coast. Columbus wrote:

"This island is surrounded by many very safe and wide harbors, not excelled by any others that I have ever seen. Many great and salubrious rivers flow through it. There are also many very high mountains there.

"All these islands are very beautiful, and distinguished by various qualities; they are accessible, and full of a great variety of trees stretching up to the stars; the leaves of which I believe are never shed, for I saw them as green and flourishing as they are usually in Spain in the month of May; some of them were blossoming, some were bearing fruit, some were in other conditions; each one was thriving in its own way. The nightingale and various other birds without number were singing in the month of November, when I was exploring them. There are besides in the said island Juana seven or eight kinds of palm trees, which far excel ours in height and beauty, just as all the other trees, herbs, and fruits do."

Believed Visitors Were Celestial

Of the natives of the islands Columbus wrote:

"These people practise no kind of idolatry; on the contrary they firmly believe that all strength and power, and in fact all good things are in heaven, and that I had come down from thence with these ships and sailors; and in this belief I was received there after they had put aside fear. Nor are they slow or unskilled, but of excellent and acute understanding; and the men who have navigated that sea give an account of everything in an admirable manner; but they never saw people clothed, nor this kind of ships."

One island which Columbus called Mateunin, probably Martinique, he believed to be inhabited only by women.

"These women," he said, "perform no kind of work of their sex, for they use bows and darts; they protect themselves with sheets of copper. They tell me of another island, whose inhabitants are without hair, and which abounds in gold above all others."

UMI

an accident which sorely taxed his patience as well as his body, and which is mentioned here as it illustrates the grit and stamina of his moral and physical make-up.

"As his ship, the Kite, was working its way through the ice fields off the Greenland shore, a cake of ice became wedged in the rudder, causing the wheel to reverse. One of the spokes jammed Peary's leg against the casement, making it impossible to extricate himself until both bones of the leg were broken. The party urged him to return to the United States for the winter and to resume his exploration the following year. But Peary insisted on being landed as originally planned at McCormick Bay, stating that the money of his friends had been invested in the project and that he must 'make good' to them. The assiduous nursing of Mrs. Peary, aided by the bracing air, so speedily restored his strength that at the ensuing Christmas festivities, which were arranged for the Eskimos, he outraced on snowshoes all the natives and his own men!

Flowers and Oxen of Greenland

"In the following May, with one companion, Astrup, he ascended to the summit of the great ice cap which covers the interior of Greenland, 5,000 to 8,000 feet in elevation, and pushed northward for 500 miles over a region where the foot of man had never trod before, in temperatures ranging from 10° to 50° below zero. Imagine his surprise on descending from the tableland to enter a little valley radiant with gorgeous flowers and alive with murmuring bees, where musk oxen were lazily browsing.

This sledding journey, which he duplicated by another equally remarkable crossing of the ice cap three years later, defined the northern extension of Greenland and conclusively proved that it is an island instead of a continent extending to the pole. In boldness of conception and brilliancy of results these two crossings of Greenland are unsurpassed in Arctic history. The magnitude of Peary's feat is better appreciated when it is recalled that Nansen's historic crossing of the island was below the Arctic Circle, 1,000 miles south of Peary's latitude, where Greenland is some 250 miles wide.

"Peary now turned his attention to the pole, which lay 396 geographical miles farther north than any man had penetrated on the Western Hemisphere. To get there by the American route he must break a virgin trail every mile north from Greely's 83° 24′. No one had pioneered so great a distance northward. Markham and others had attained enduring fame by advancing the flag considerably less than 100 miles, Parry had pioneered 150 miles, and Nansen 128 from his ship.

"In his first North Polar Expedition, which lasted for four years, 1898-1902, Peary failed to get nearer than 343 miles to the pole. Each successive year dense packs of ice blocked the passage to the Polar Ocean, compelling him to make his base approximately 700 miles from the pole, or 200 miles south of the headquarters of Nares, too great a distance from the pole to be overcome in one short season. During this trying period, by sledging feats which in distance and physical obstacles overcome exceeded the extraordinary records made in Greenland, he explored and mapped hundreds of miles of coast line of Greenland and of the islands west and north of Greenland.

A New World's Record

"On the next attempt, Peary insured reaching the Polar Ocean by designing and constructing the Roosevelt, whose resistless frame crushed its way to the shores of the Polar Sea. From here he made that wonderful march of 1906 to 87° 6′, a new world's record. Winds of unusual fury, by opening big leads, robbed him of the pole and nearly of his life.

"The last Peary expedition 1908-1909 resulted in the discovery of the pole and of the deep ocean surrounding it."

A Commercial Report

The explorer's summary of the commercial advantages of the islands said: "I promise this, that if I am supported by our most invincible sovereigns with a little of their help, as much gold can be supplied as they will need, indeed as much of spices, of cotton, of chewing-gum (which is only found in Chios), also as much of aloes-wood, and as many slaves for the navy, as their majesties will wish to demand."

Interesting sidelights on the first trans-Atlantic voyage abound in the biography of Ferdinand Columbus, based on his illustrious father's log. This journal contained a surprising amount of data telling what winds blew, how far he sailed with each particular wind, what currents are found, and "everything that was seen by the way, whether birds, fishes, or any other thing."

How Lobster Played Its Part

Every school child knows that the birds gave the mariners their first inkling of their approach to land; the lobster has scarcely had his due for confirming the portent of the birds. Ferdinand Columbus writes:

"Next day (September 17) the seaweed was seen in much greater quantity, and a small live lobster was observed among the weeds; from this circumstance many affirmed that they were certainly near the land."

In addition to his duties as mariner and his task of keeping a voluminous journal Columbus frequently had to keep his men from turning back by shrewd and ingenious appeals. Following the excitement of his men over the irregularities of the compass, the narrator says that Columbus, "alleged that it was occasioned by the polar star making a circuit round the pole, by which they were not a little satisfied."

Bulletin No. 5, January 21, 1924.

© *National Geographic Society.*

A NITRATE PLANT OF NORTHERN CHILE

Iodine is an important by-product of nitrate manufacture. Nitrate fields are at the bottom of the famous Tacna-Arica dispute (see Bulletin No. 1). At the side of the plant, shown above, are big hoppers into which caliche, the crude nitrate rock from the desert, is unloaded. From the hoppers the rock is fed into the crushers, and, after being broken into small pieces, is thrown into iron vats and boiled until the saltpetre can be filtered.